



News Release

WISCONSIN ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Welcome home celebration planned for Black River Falls National Guard unit Thursday

Almost exactly one year after they were ordered to active duty March 15, 2003, 59 soldiers from the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 1158th Transportation Company will be back in Black River Falls this week.

National Guard officials are planning a "welcome home" celebration for the unit members and their families Thursday afternoon [March 11]. The public is also invited to attend.

The Wisconsin National Guard's commander, Maj. Gen. Al Wilkening, will lead officials participating in the welcome home. Other officials from the city of Tomah, Jackson County, the state legislature and the U.S. Congress have also been invited to take part.

The welcome home celebration will be held at the Black River Falls National Guard Armory at 441 Highway 54 West beginning at 1:30 p.m. Entertainment will be provided by the National Guard's 132nd Army Band of Madison.

The 1158th Transportation was mobilized Mar. 15, 2003. The unit is based in Tomah with detachments in Black River Falls and Beloit. About half the company's soldier were released from active duty in June, but about 60 soldiers from Black River Falls and 80 from Beloit were assigned stateside active duty missions.

From Black River Falls, 59 soldiers were sent to Fort Irwin, Calif., to provide transportation support to the Army's National Training Center. The Black River Falls-based soldiers completed their mission at Fort Irwin at the end of February and will be released from active duty after they return to Black River Falls from Fort McCoy this week.

The Wisconsin Guard still has about 1,500 soldiers and airmen on active duty. Of those, 1,015 are deployed overseas.

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Note to Editors and News Directors: News media are welcome to cover this event at the Black River Falls armory. The armory is located at 441 Highway 54 West, Black River Falls.

The event, which is also open to the general public, will begin at 1:30 p.m. and last about 30 minutes. Expected participants include Maj. Gen. Al Wilkening, the Adjutant General of Wisconsin commander of the Wisconsin National Guard. Other federal, state and local officials have also been invited to participate.